

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 3643

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, UY

SUBJ: DISSENSION AMONG ARMY GENERALS

REF: IR 6 900 0102 75

1. SUMMARY: PRESSURES ARE MOUNTING FOR IMMEDIATE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST FOURTH DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL GREGORIO ALVAREZ FOR HAVING STRUCK THEN ACTING FONMIN MICHELIN SOME DAYS AGO. (SEE REF.) LEADING THE CLAMGA FOR CHASTISEMENT IS FIRST DIVISION COMMANDER CRISTI WHO REPORTEDLY INSISTS THAT THE PRESIDENT AND ARMY CINC VADORA DEALS WITH ALVAREZ IMMEDIATELY. WE DO NOT KNOW THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION: HE HAD GIVEN VADORA UNTIL AFTER THE CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN ARMY CHIEFS TO ACT. AT STAKE IS THE FUTURE OF THE MAN CONSIDERED TO BE THE LEADER OF THE POPULIST SECTION OF THE ARMED FORCES AS WELL AS AN ISSUE OF PRESTIGE FOR THE CABINET ITSELF. ALTHOUGH ALVAREZ HAS SHOWN GREAT RESILIENCE IN THE PAST AND CANNOT BE COUNTED OUT, STRIKING AN ACTING MINISTER IN HIS OFFICE IS UNPRECEDENTED AND SERIOUS. THE FORCES LINED UP AGAINST HIM APPEAR TO BE GREATER THAN EVER BEFORE AND THE ISSUE IS BEING FORCED. END SUMMARY

2. INCIDENT IN WHICH FOURTH DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL ALVAREZ STRUCK THEN ACTING FONMIN MICHELIN FOR ALLEGEDLY HAVING CALLED HIM A HOMOSEXUAL (SEE REF) COULD WELL GIVE RISE TO INTRA-ARMY AND PERHAPS MILITARY-CIVILIAN DISSENSION SOONER THAN ANTICIPATED. AS  
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INDICATED IN IR, PRESIDENT BORDABERRY REPORTEDLY GAVE ARMY CINC

VADORA UNTIL AFTER CONFERENCE OF AMERICAN ARMY CHIEFS TO TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST ALVAREZ. NOW, HOWEVER, VARIOUS SOURCES REPORT THAT FIRST DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL CRISTI, A LONG-TIME ADVERSARY OF ALVAREZ, IS INSISTING ON IMMEDIATE ACTION AGAINST ALVAREZ.

3. THERE ARE REPORTS ALSO THAT BRIGADIER CARDOZO, HEAD OF THE JOINT STAFF (ESMACO) AND NORMALLY AN ALVAREZ SUPPORTER, IS FURIOUS AT ALVAREZ. APPARENTLY, CARDOZO, WHO WAS ASKED TO ACCOMPANY ALVAREZ TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WHEN MICHELIN WAS STRUCK, BELIEVES HE HAS BEEN USED.

4. CRISTI, WHO JUST RETURNED FROM A LONG SICK LEAVE, MUST SEE THIS AS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO GET RID OF HIS ARCH-ENEMY. NOT ONLY DOES HE HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF SUPPORT IN THE ARMY FOR SUCH A MOVE BUT ALSO, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, STRONG SUPPORT IN THE EXECUTIVE, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF CABINET MINISTERS, AMONG WHOM WE BELIEVE IN FONMIN BLANCO, WHO CONSIDER ALVAREZ' ATTACK AN INTOLERABLE AFFRONT.

5. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THIS IS A SERIOUS ISSUE AND THAT A GREAT DEAL IS AT STAKE. ALVAREZ IS CONSIDERED A LEFTIST BY MANY OF HIS SENIOR MILITARY BROTHERN WHO GENERALLY ARE FAR MORE CONSERVATIVE THAN HE. HIS FALL WOULD REMOVE WHAT MANY CONSIDER A POSSIBLE PERUVIANIST THREAT IN THE ARMED FORCES. HOWEVER, CONJECTURE OVER ALVAREZ' DEMISE WOULD STILL BE PREMATURE. FIRST, HE HAS BEEN ATTACKED BEFORE, INCLUDING BY CRISTI, BUT HAS SHOWN GREAT RESILIENCE AND HAS HELD ON. SECOND, HE PROBABLY HAS THE SUPPORT OF MANY YOUNGER OFFICERS WHO SHARE HIS BELIEFS. THIRD HE IS VERY CAPABLE. FOURTH, HE CAN PLAY THE UNITY THEME, ARGUING WITH FELLOW OFFICERS THAT THEY MUST SUPPORT ONE OF THEIR OWN WHO WAS DEFENDING HIS HONOR FROM BEING BESMIRCHED BY A CIVILIAN. MUCH OF THIS HAS BEEN SAID IN THE PAST BUT THERE IS A NEW ELEMENT IN THE LINEUP AGAINST ALVAREZ THIS TIME, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE WHO IS SUPPORTED, PERHAPS EVEN PUSHED, BY HIS MINISTERS, AND STRIKING A CABINET OFFICER IS ALSO A NEW ELEMENT.  
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